

Introduction

Thank you for welcoming me to your school, and for the invitation to attend your "Change the World at Lunchtime" lecture series.

Today I would like to speak with you about our friendship - the Australian and American friendship, and how this relationship benefits us all.

First let me put my role in a context for you, and then - I know some of you will have questions for me, and I think that is a good way we can learn more about each other, so I will be happy to answer any questions from you when I finish up.

Introduction to role

I am the U.S. Consul General. I head the U.S. Consulate General here in Melbourne.

We have Consulates General in Sydney and Perth as well.

The Embassy is an institution that acts as the direct link between the government of the United States and the Government of Australia, and between our two peoples. My chief duty as Consul General is to speak to members of the Australian public on a broad range of topics, and in my addresses I strive to explain the policies of the U.S. Government.

I'm proud to say that the very first country to open a consulate in Melbourne was the United States. My consulate first opened its doors some 154 years ago, less than 20 years after the founding of the city of

Melbourne. The U.S. Government's long-term presence in Melbourne means that I am the 60th U.S. Consul General to be posted here, a fact that testifies to the longstanding importance my government has placed on its relationship with Australia.

US AUSTRALIA RELATIONSHIP

The United States has no more staunch and valued ally than Australia. The relationship between the United States and Australia is a great and enduring friendship, based on shared values and a love of liberty and democracy; tested in war and peace; and growing from strength to strength.

Both Australia and America are two of the oldest continuous democratic countries; we have common laws and common political traditions from our common forbears from England, Ireland and Northern Europe.

Paving the way for an easier relationship - we share a common language, although it could be argued that sometimes accents are so thick we're speaking a whole other language!

Both Australians and Americans value the right of self-expression, we pride ourselves in the right to worship freely – on the right to speak our minds aloud, to tolerate dissent and to welcome diversity.

As an American, I believe in the motto carved onto the U.S. Supreme Court's building, "Equal Rights Under the Law" and I hear that concept articulated so often in Australia as "giving every one a fair go".

It is because of our shared interests and all the things we have in common that Australia and the United States can work to promote security, democracy and rights of each person around the world.

So not only do we share the ability and the weight of responsibility to work on a global scale, but if we ignored our global responsibilities as partners, and only focused on our own countries - we would be turning our backs on our own value systems.

When she visited Australia in 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that *"The United States and Australia are a people who believes in freedom, a people who believes in compassion, a people who believes that we're at our best when power and principle and compassion go together"*.

From my time here as Consul General, I really feel that never before has our relationship been stronger or our peoples, closer.

Roughly 90,000 Australians are currently living in the United States, and at any one time we can estimate there are 40,000 Americans in our Consular district – more than 130,000 American's visited Australia in 2006.

Every year thousands of students travel each way to study on exchanges, and more and more Australian students are choosing the States as their country of choice for their 'gap' year...

And of course our countries share an interest in popular culture. Already a large number of Hollywood's A-list and American television's actors and actresses are Australians. We're seeing an increasing amount of Hollywood in Australia – Steven Spielberg is about to start work on his next epic in Melbourne.

Some of you may have already seen the Guggenheim or Pixar exhibitions currently showing in Melbourne.

Our ties are not just strong in popular culture. The relationship between our two countries is a vibrant partnership for facing the evolving challenges of the modern world.

Economic ties:

I recognize that when the partnership is mentioned, everyone immediately thinks of our shared interest in security – however, our links are greater across a whole range of fields, providing mutual benefit for both our countries, Australia and the United States work together across issues of public health, research and development, crisis response strategies and trade.

Both our countries share belief in the importance of free-market economics, and are committed to liberalizing global trade. Each year the US imports about 10.3 billion dollars worth of goods and services from Australia – our free trade agreement created more economic opportunity for citizens of both countries.

Flowing from enhanced investment and deeper links with the biggest economy in the world, all sectors of the Australian economy receive dynamic gains from the free trade agreement. Industry sectors that benefit the most from the FTA are auto, metals, minerals, seafood, paper and chemicals.

In the past Australia was locked out of the world's largest government procurement market - The free trade agreement gave full access for the very first time for Australian goods and services to this \$200 billion market.

The FTA agreement improves Australian access to US innovation, which drives the global information economy and information age – Australian industry only benefits from having such a direct link to latest developments.

Defense ties:

Of course there is a strategic perspective to our relationship, benefits we both receive from our “strength in numbers”. An example of this, and one that is often foremost on our minds through the mouth of the media – is our defense relationship.

Our countries have fought alongside each other in every major military conflict since World War One. Today we are engaged in a different kind of war in the Middle East, where our values are being challenged but Australia once again has demonstrated its commitment to our enduring friendship.

Australia's long standing participation in ANZUS – the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty alliance is the cornerstone of our relationship – our security partnership has contributed greatly to Australia's national security for over 50 years through increased global security.

Our partnership isn't just only in an historical context –but is like any good friendship- consistently worked upon. Much time and effort is undertaken by both countries in high-level exchanges, which includes close meetings

of our defense forces, joint training operations and visits. I am sure none of you missed seeing images of the recent Kitty Hawk visit to Sydney – the Kitty Hawk was here as a part of our joint training with the Australian defense force. All this working together means that there is great interoperability between our armed forces, and our intelligence units to protect the shared interests of our people and to facilitate global stability

To this end - we join efforts is our aim to secure regional stability throughout the Pacific and East Asia – including efforts to denuclearize the Korean peninsula.

Australia and the United States are working together to build a free and democratic Iraq, and are working cooperatively to fight the scourge of terrorism. Intelligence cooperation and coordination between our countries are strong and reflect again our values – there is an unprecedented level of trust and transparency between our two Governments. Neither of our peoples wish to experience another September 11 or a Bali bombing so we are working together to best protect our people against the sort of horror we have already had to witness.

Our defense partnership also plays a significant role in times of human crisis – our countries worked together to provide aid and assistance during the Boxing Day Tsunami relief efforts in South East Asia.

Climate ties:

Australia and The United States are also linked on climate issues. We work together through the Asia Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and

Climate. In accordance to our values, both countries wish to leave a legacy of a healthy and sustained environment for future Americans and Australians. Our scientists and great thinkers work together to come up with options and solutions for climate issues – including managing our natural resources. We openly share our ideas and our solutions.

Conclusion

As a school with such a focused attention on international understanding, I know you would all be aware how important it is to be tolerant of difference and recognize that we can only move forward by focusing on the values we all share.

I recognize there are concerns within some circles about the benefit of the close ties Australia and the United States share, but I would like you to think about what a loss our countries would be at without our strong friendship.

There is an old saying that “two heads are better than one” has never rung truer than in this era where Australia and the United States are both looked toward by our neighbors to provide aid, assistance and support for economic stability, and security.

Our relationship is not built upon back patting and on false platitude, but on the true and tangible benefits our relationship has come to provide to each of us – and our neighbors. The scope and effectiveness of our engagement with regional countries and institutions has been positively enhanced by the strength of the Australian and American relationship.

We know that we can learn so much from our relationship with Australia, and we can share our knowledge and resources.

In the end our relationship comes down to recognizing that to do the very best thing we can for the people of each of our countries and the peoples of the world we can not work in isolation, we must work together

The Australian and American partnership reflects the inherent values our two countries share, and the human responsibility our people both share for global care.

Again I would like to thank you for having me, and I will be happy to answer any questions you have for me.